

# Woman as a Great Factor in the Coming Election

WITH 15,000,000 women marching to the polls on November 4, the fate of the next presidential campaign would seem to be in the hands of the mothers, wives and sisters of the United States. The two presidential candidates, whoever they may be, will have to devise a new appeal and endure a new scrutiny, and the party managers are already becoming aware that political methods which have previously gone unquestioned by the male voters may receive a very critical examination at the hands of the new women voters.

How will the women vote? That is a question the true answer of which the political trainers of the country would give weights of gold to learn.

There are those who take the view that the additional 15,000,000 votes will simply mean that many more votes to count without appreciably affecting the situation. This view is based on the assumption that the women will find their places in the two old parties in about the same ratio that the men have found theirs; that they will be as pliable to party appeals as the men have shown themselves.

It must be said, however, that this view is not shared by the managers who have been sounding public opinion during the past year. As a matter of fact, the managers are as much "in the air" as anyone on this question. The only "dark horse" that has yet appeared has been the women's vote. No one will undertake to say with positiveness where it will bestow itself. Certainly no party claims it as yet. And there is an uneasy feeling in party councils that the old appeals will not make much impression on the women, which feeling is rendered still more uneasy by the uncertainty as to just what appeal the women are waiting for.

There is no indication that the women are contemplating a woman's party which in the coming election will present definite policies whose adoption with pledges to work them out will be the price of their suffrage. A woman's party is by no means an impossibility, but there are no present indications of it attaining such strength as to form a separate political unit in the coming campaign. The women have shown a commendable hesitancy about further complicating the election problem in this country by waiting to see how capable the two old parties will prove themselves to be in meeting the situation; that is to say, the old parties are now on trial before the womanhood of the country. They are being given an opportunity to prove themselves fit vehicles for the realization of women's ideals for the United States.

## Women Always Did Their Part

THIS absence of rigid political organization does not, however, indicate indifference on the part of the newly enfranchised sex. Anyone, who is conversant with the intellectual activities of the women of the United States during the past two years, must be amazed at the energy and intelligence with which they have set themselves to master the problems that their new responsibility brings to them. The programs of most of the women's clubs are clear-cut schedules of study in the machinery of government and of the unsettled problems that form the bulk of each campaign's paramount issue. Textbooks by the score have appeared to inform the women of the structure of our political system, special editions being issued to explain the various forms of state government. Lectures by the thousands have been delivered in schools, churches and club rooms by experts, and even the politicians have not been slighted—they too have been invited to appear and explain their more partisan points of view. But, in the main, the women have followed the unpartisan course of studying government and its problems as they are, without reference to party programs, party success, or candidates' ambitions. There has been a really remarkable, though informal, continent-wide period of study which might be described as The American Women's Course in American Government.

The American woman has always been in politics, at least as far as her interest was concerned. Municipal sanitation, street cleaning, milk inspection, health protection, school facilities, the liquor and amusement problems have always been a part of the American woman's life because these things touched her home life—the health, morals and progress of her family. Municipal government is simply housekeeping on a community scale, and woman is the world's housekeeper.

But with the war, the woman's interest was widened. She saw the power of the vaster and more distant problems to affect her home. What transpired in Europe intimately affected herself and family. It had power to take her husband or son. It registered itself daily on her dinner table in "wheat substitutes" or scarcity of staples. It registered itself on her household budget in the steadily rising cost of living. World peace or world war suddenly was revealed to her as a problem in world housekeeping.

And then, when the Americanization work commenced, women found themselves engrossed in the task of trying to

make up for the years of criminal neglect on the part of those interests which imported peasant labor from Europe for the purpose of forming a cheap, underpaid, industrial underclass. Women saw that if American principles were to be taught, they must be practiced too. They saw the folly of putting the meaning of America into words only, when that meaning could only be conveyed by deeds.

Thus the times conspired, together with the women's own efforts, to put them in touch with public problems, removing these problems from the academic atmosphere of the club lecture and showing them to be instinct with vital life.

The parties have made their first tentative appeals to the women vote by their attitude on those questions relating to war. Men fight wars, but women suffer from them. Men have the excitement of the contest, but women have the weary waiting at home, and too often the endless weeping of bereavement. War is a greater horror in the minds of women than of men, because women have the finer sensibilities to appreciate its abysmal barbarism. Thus, the Republican party appeals to women on the ground of its repudiation of Article X of the Covenant of the League of Nations. "By contesting and refusing to ratify this article," say the Republican managers (and the fact that the managers say it may indicate that the Republicans of the Senate are merely furnishing campaign material and not seriously endeavoring to settle the affairs of the world), "we are saving your boy from having to fight Europe's battles."

It would not be a bad argument at all if the Democrats did not have the weightier retort—"By insisting on Article X we are saving all the men and all the boys of every country in the world from having to go to war at all. Article X puts the force of civilization behind the peace of the world. If we refuse to put American force behind peace, it is only a matter of time before another European war will break out, out of which the United States cannot possibly keep itself, and then, Article X or no Article X, American men and boys will have to go to slaughter again."

The whole instinct of the women will be for peace everywhere, not in the United States only, but throughout the world. There never was a time when the motherhood of the world was split on racial or national lines. Every mother knows how every other mother feels; motherhood is universal; and universal motherhood is on the side of universal peace.

In this battle of the parties, the Democrats have the advantage of the Republicans in the history of their respective attitudes toward equal suffrage when it was still a debated question. The women will hardly be likely to forget, at least not as early as the next campaign, which party most assisted them in obtaining the right of the ballot. The women themselves will not forget that the members of their own sex who campaigned most vigorously against the ballot being given to their sisters were women whose Republican associations were apparent. They will not forget that it was a Democratic president who lent the weight of his leadership to the passage of the amendment.

In any case the women of the United States will do well to realize that they absolutely hold the balance of power in the next election, that the next President of the United States may be chosen by their ballots, unless they fritter their opportunity away by a failure to realize the responsibility which this places upon them. If they allow themselves to follow the women leaders who have already allied themselves as auxiliary party managers; if they permit their power to be absorbed by the cunning manipulators whose object is to nullify the effect of the 15,000,000 new votes, they will

## Your Own United States



**S**PEAKING of your own United States, not so many of us realize that that includes Porto Rico, where they live in houses like the above, and wear few clothes. The natives are being taught American ways and American ideals, but they still build their homes from bamboo sticks and use palm leaves for walls. This really makes a comfortable dwelling when one considers that the climate is tropical.

**F**OR the first time in the history of the United States, women have equal rights with men, in selecting a president. They will hold the balance of power, and the strong political parties realize that more than ever before, they must make an appeal for humanity, must deal with the woman instinct, which has a way all its own of divining that which is right or wrong.

so greatly depreciate the power they now hold that it will be a long time before the politicians will again regard their vote as a serious factor in public affairs. If the women are wise, they will cast their ballots with such a telling degree of unanimity for the cause of world idealism, that the politicians will be compelled to hold their power in wholesome respect ever afterward.

## Women for Idealism

**T**HE United States took a position during the war which no American woman will want to see surrendered or reversed; not the commercial and financial position about which so many boast, but the position of humanitarianism and idealism which for a time made us a prophet-nation in the eyes of the world. It is humbling to think back upon the pathetic hopefulness with which the burdened peoples of Europe hailed our announcement of purpose and ideals; it is very sad to think that now those same peoples regard us as having proved apostate to our high principles. But the women of the United States have not proved recreant to the principles enshrined in the historic Fourteen Points, and it is easily within the voting power of the women of the United States to prove to the world that the people of the United States are just as keenly desirous of the world's welfare as ever they were. A few senators have succeeded in placing an unenviable stain upon the United States' reputation for good faith; it is within the power of the women to wash out that stain and bring back hope to the world next November.

These, then, are some of the effects we may expect from the 15,000,000 new votes soon to be cast: the notice given to political managers that a new and independent force has arisen in the country, and the assurance given the world at large that the women of the United States will insist upon the resumption of the work which has already been originated in preparation for the New Era.

But another effect will follow—a cleansing, purifying effect upon our whole partisan system.

Nothing possesses more power for ill in a country than the unchallenged control of any political group. The women must remember that it is not necessary for certain parties or certain candidates to be elected in order that a certain group may obtain or keep control. There is a super-group that retains control whatever candidate may be elected. The women can break the power of that super-group by voting according to their womanly conceptions of righteousness, and by using their power to force up for public action the living issues which the political managers sometimes try to conceal. That is not always the paramount issue which is so labelled by the politicians. Often they try to switch the people to a secondary issue in order that they may not have to stand the judgment test of the whole people voting on the issue nearest their hearts. Just now there is a desperate attempt to make the people believe that Bolshevism is the issue in the United States, when really the vital issue both to the United States and the world is whether we are to abolish war, and with it the interests whose power and wealth consist in their control of the devices by which war is prepared and waged. If the women see a question which ought to be settled, and see that question sidetracked by the strategy of politicians, they are numerous enough to raise that issue by themselves, and strong enough to force a national decision upon it.

Their very presence will be a challenge to the crookedness and double-dealing which so often mars the exercise of the franchise in America. Every election case which reaches the courts is an exposure of a perfect system of under-handed control whose ramifications extend to the most remote hamlet in the most unimportant county. The forces of dishonesty are well organized. They retain their hold by the easy-going nature of the men voters who hesitate to raise questions of morality in connection with politics. But the women will at once sense dishonesty, and their very natures will prevent them acquiescing in it. Political corruption has found a strong opponent in the woman's presence in the voting booth.

If the women of America only see their opportunity with sufficient clearness and use it with sufficient unity and directness, politics will once more become an honorable field of endeavor.